

## Studies in Intelligence: Practitioners and Academics, Opposites or Collaborators?

For presentation to the ISA Intelligence Studies Section, February 19, 1:45 pm, Grand Salon.  
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I have studied spies for over 20 years, first because I'm a specialist in the causes of war and secondly because the U.S. Constitution has been injured by problems in our intelligence community. One cannot have a comprehensive view on why wars start without attending to what intelligence groups are up to. And the Constitution is America's greatest strength, so it matters when it is harmed and innocents are injured. Governments need good intelligence systems to protect themselves and our peoples from a sometimes brutal world. So you might think that collaboration with academics would be easy. But it is not, for a great many reasons.

So one answer to the question of opposites or collaborators is that I have collaborated with hundreds of intelligence professionals over the years, only occasionally and temporarily have I been an adversary, and very rarely an enemy. I have never been "opposite" despite the fact that we come from quite different cultures, because we are in basically the same business as those who are paid to do intelligence full time with the important exception that I work on human and civilizational survival, not for any particular agency of any government.

Other academics with much higher profiles than mine, like Loch Johnson, have worked for decades to improve conditions in friendly intelligence systems starting with years on the staff of the Church Committee that investigated dysfunctions you are all aware of. Like a medical doctor, Loch knows you cannot solve serious problems if you refuse to look at them clinically, and there are times when any living system gets sick.

Some academics hate intelligence professionals and institutions because they associate those with crimes of the past, or policies of the present, that injure people or values they hold dear. I will set those unrelenting critics aside for now, because minutes are precious and I want to focus on what you need to know. Intelligence is a tool of war, as Art aptly noted one day.

First, our civilization **IS** in danger and in the very worst of worst case scenarios, human survival itself is at risk. That's what I work on daily and why I have more in common with the average troop than I do with many scholars. So for intelligence professionals who are pledged and dedicated to the protection of their peoples, I say: We must work together better, and fight less, so that we can better deal with the challenges to civilization during a time of real crises.

Second, I worked hard on Open Source initiatives for years and on the idea in general, so I'm very glad to see some progress on that front. But my God is it slow! This amazes me because your children are in just as much danger as mine, so I'd think you would move more briskly to protect them. But you know why bureaucracies change slowly, and we all know that intelligence organizations face special problems that make absolute openness an impossible goal.

Third, the best paper I wrote during that period was a piece on how tradecraft induces mental illness among many practitioners, not all, just many. John thought I'd lost my mind when he saw it. But mental illness is a real occupational hazard that could be mitigated if it could be talked about openly. I did not write that paper for ISA (rather for Steele's OSS group) but I'm sure that psychiatrists at CIA saw it. Whether that helped anyone I cannot know because agency psychiatrists can't talk in public without permission from god and that takes way too much work. That is the biggest single barrier to real collaboration – it frightens the security gremlins.

This illustrates a dimension that recurs in this academic vs. practitioner paradigm. I did not work so hard or write that paper to injure anyone – I did it to help practitioners with their own health, their families and ultimately missions when those are benign. But facing painful realities can be, well, painful. Sometimes even doctors have to hurt a little, to heal more.

When openness gained some traction I shifted focus to intelligence ethics because that is another piece of the answer to the big challenges we must face. Intelligence systems need to professionalize as quickly as they can. That is never easy and requires among other items organic development of a real code of ethics and probably several because the special challenges for analysts, operators and collectors are quite different in important ways.

A “real” code of ethics is not the book of regulations, it's not “the law” and it is not a list of do's and don'ts. You all know those rules: “Don't steal from your employers, even though your business may be stealing from others; Don't lie to your bosses, even though you may be required to lie to the rest of the world; Don't hire relatives, and don't get caught.” That's ethics for morons and true professionals can do much better than that ... if they want to.

Time is too short to say more about that now so I will just offer you a little reader that was produced by collaboration among 30 intelligence professionals from seven countries with considerable help from this section in 2007. That is one tangible example of collaboration.

So back to the task today; are academics and practitioners opposites or collaborators? Well that all depends on your attitude and behaviors, period. Everyone at this table has been both an academic and a practitioner. So I would bet that all of us would prefer productive collaboration to stupid wars among our groups. But spies who will come to conferences with open agendas are rare. Academics who can successfully cross the culture gap are also rare, but faculty at Oxford, Princeton, Tel Aviv, Harvard, Yale, Georgetown, and many other universities worldwide illustrate the porous boundaries between these domains.

Civilization is at risk today as weapons of mass destruction come to the hands of people who are very upset with civilization at this time. Such capability and evil intention will come together if we do not get our own act together in time. So I wish you all the very best success with your part of the common effort to preserve civilization against barbarism. And I thank you very much for your time today.